

1874 - 2024



# TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Stevens Point, Wisconsin*



Trinity's 150th Anniversary



United in Christ, Ignited by the Spirit, Excited to Serve!



**TRINITY 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

<b>April 7, 2024</b>	<b>Celebration Kick-off 9:00 Worship ECSW Bishop Anne Edison-Albright</b>	<b>10:30 Portage Co. History Presentation John Harry 11:30 Scandinavian Luncheon Historical Display</b>
<b>April 14, 2024</b>	<b>9:00 Worship Rev. Ron Pechauer, Former Pastor</b>	<b>10:15 Coffee Reception Historical Display</b>
<b>April 21, 2024</b>	<b>9:00 Worship Trinity members who have become pastors</b>	<b>10:15 Brunch served by CL&amp;G Comm. Trinity Library History Display</b>
<b>April 28, 2024</b>	<b>9:00 Worship Rev. Michael Fazio, Former Intern</b>	<b>10:15 Coffee Reception Trinity Library History Display</b>
<b>May 5, 2024</b>	<b>9:00 Worship Rev. Ken Knutson, Former Pastor Deacon Sandra Wendland</b>	<b>10:15 Coffee Reception Trinity History Display</b>
<b>May 12, 2024</b>	<b>9:00 Worship Rev. David Maxfield, Former Pastor Deacon Sandra Wendland</b>	<b>10:15 Coffee Reception Trinity History Display</b>
<b>May 19, 2024</b>	<b>9:00 Worship Rev. Steven Olson, Former Pastor</b>	<b>10:15 Coffee Reception Trinity Women's Display</b>
<b>May 26, 2024</b>	<b>9:00 Worship Baccalaureate</b>	<b>10:15 Coffee Reception Trinity Music History Display</b>
<b>June 2, 2024</b>	<b>9:00 Final Celebration Worship Rev. Clay Schmit, Former Pastor</b>	<b>10:15 Heritage Brunch Trinity Music History Display Family Heritage Display</b>



**Theme:** *"United in Christ, Ignited by the Spirit, Excited to Serve"*

**Bible Verse:** *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord....plans to give you hope and a future" Jeremiah 29:11*

**Hymn:** *"We Are Called" ELW #720*

## *THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES TO BE TRINITY.*

### *SO CELEBRATE! GOD'S SPIRIT IS WITH US!*

One hundred fifty years of Lutherans in Stevens Point is reason to celebrate! It's been my privilege to be a neighbor pastor to Trinity since 2006 and now as your "part-time supply interim pastor." This anniversary celebration can't be just about looking backward to the past 150 years. It's also a chance to look forward to many more years as God's people gathering to worship and going out to serve.

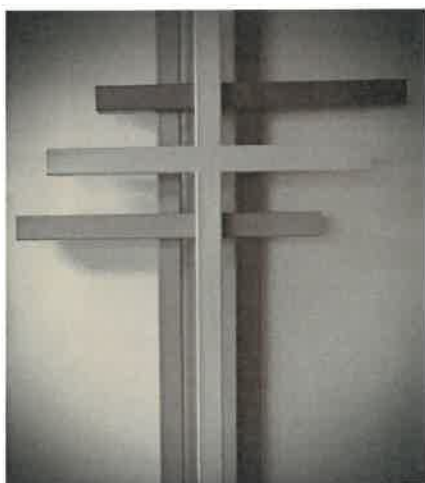


Over the years, I've witnessed a congregation that is "United in Christ, Ignited by the Spirit, Excited to Serve!" Your commitment to be God's hands and feet bears witness to your commitment to be Christ's presence in this world—as you worship and as you reach out to others through the Trinity Learning Center, through your partnership with other area churches under the umbrella of One Big Tent, and through many more outreach ministries.

These are transition times at Trinity, time to explore where and how God is calling you to be God's people. You have many questions: Who will serve as Trinity's next pastor? When will that pastor arrive? What will change as we move forward in Christ's name? What will remain constant? How will we continue to worship and serve in Christ's name? In the midst of uncertainty, I am confident that God's Spirit is at work in and through you, now and in the years to come.

We gather to worship—we go out to serve. The pattern has been repeated through the years, changing as needed, beginning with those first Norwegian Lutheran settlers. We are a bridge between the past and the future, continuing to meet the needs of those surrounding us within the congregation, the community, and the world. The way we live and serve in Christ's name has changed over the years, but we still gather to worship, and we still go out to serve into a world that needs us to be "United in Christ, Ignited by the Spirit, and Excited to Serve!"

Rev. Joyce Heintz,  
Interim Pastor



# TRINITY HISTORY

In 1847, Stevens Point got its name and its original platting. Wisconsin became a state the following year. The first worship services held in Stevens Point were conducted by an itinerant Presbyterian preacher in 1847 usually in homes or boarding houses. The first Norwegian Lutheran services were conducted by Nils Brandt, northern Wisconsin's Norwegian missionary pastor, in 1856 in the home of Joel Scott in Stevens Point. Pastor Brandt, working primarily in the Scandinavia area, continued to visit Stevens Point once or twice a year. He was followed by Pastor A. Mikkelsen until 1870 when a portion of the Scandinavia parish, New Hope (Amherst), called Pastor Nils Berge. Pastor Berge also conducted services at the "mission church" in Stevens Point until 1873 when the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran

Congregation in Stevens Point was established. The church was formally incorporated April 26, 1874, and was known as Trinity congregation.

While early worship services were held in people's homes and for a short time in the Presbyterian Church, once the congregation was formed, they wanted their own church building. Thus, in 1874 the congregation purchased a half interest in the German Lutheran church at the corners of Elk and Shaurette streets for \$400. As their congregation grew, Trinity congregation purchased a lot at the corner of Strongs and Brawley streets in 1898 for \$500 with those funds provided by the Ladies Aid. The new church was constructed largely from volunteer labor and was dedicated in 1901.



Nils Berge 1870-1881



Nils Forde 1881-1892



Ingvar Monson 1892-1896



Christian Hovde 1897-1902



During the time the first church building was in use by the Trinity congregation (1874—1901), multiple pastors served in Stevens Point while also serving in Amherst and, starting in 1894, in the Eau Plaine (Dancy) area. These pastors included Johan Musaeus (1881), Nils Forde (1881—1892), Ingvar Monson (1892—1896), and Christian Hovde (1897—1902), who was the first of Trinity’s ministers to be born in the United States. Noteworthy during this time period was the church’s legal name change in 1898 from Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Stevens Point to Trinity Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

After the congregation moved into the new church building, services still varied in times due to the pastor

having more than one parish. Most services were in Norwegian, but a few were now in English. The church records were changed to English in 1905. Pastors during the early twentieth century included Gustave A. Sundby (1902—1910), Max Mommsen (1910—1911), Finn Magelsen (1912—1913). In 1913 Trinity purchased a house and two lots on Church and Brawley streets for a parsonage. Trinity’s first resident pastor was T.R. Ringoen who served 1914—1927. He and his family lived in the parish house for five years when a new parsonage was built for \$9,000. That parsonage was used as the pastoral residence until 1967 when it was decided to provide a housing allowance instead of a parsonage.



**Gustave A Sundby**  
1902-1910



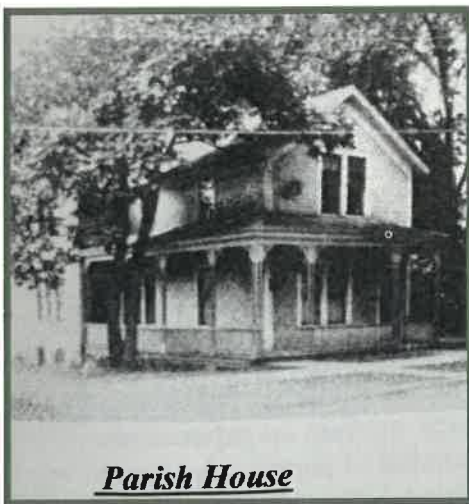
**Max F. Mommsen**  
1910-1911



**Finn Magelsen**  
1912-1913



**T.R. Ringoen**  
1914-1927



***Parish House***



***Parsonage***



**Otto Hesla**  
1927-1931



**Philip Dybvig**  
1931-1936

Pastor Otto Hesla served Trinity full-time and Eau Plaine one Sunday per month from 1927—1931. Pastor Hesla started the tradition of Christmas Eve services at Trinity. During his pastorate, a pipe organ replaced the reed organ in the church. In 1928, Trinity changed its name to First English Lutheran to correct the erroneous idea that Trinity was exclusively a Norwegian church. Pastor Dybvig served from 1931—1936. In 1934 LeRoy Fieting became the church organist, serving for 40 years.



**Mars Dale**  
1936-1940

The next decade saw frequent pastoral changes. Mars Dale (1936—1940) and his wife gave room and board to students from Central State Teachers College (now UWSP) in exchange for household help. Alf Romstad (1941—1943) didn't stay at Trinity very long due to the outbreak of World War II. He resigned to become a Navy chaplain. C. Russell Johnson (1943—1945) also did not stay at Trinity very long as he felt called to be a missionary to Madagascar.

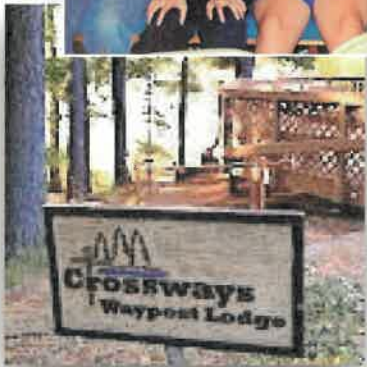


**Alf Romstad**  
1941-1943



**C. Russell Johnson**  
1943-1945

Noteworthy events during that time period include having two services on Sundays (1938), starting a building fund for a new church (1939), purchasing Mission Lake (formerly Crooked Lake) and Waypost Bible Camp (1941), and purchasing lots on Clark and Rogers streets, where our present church is located (1943). Two sons of the congregation, Gilbert Halverson and Clarence Solberg were ordained (1945).





**Orville Wold  
1945-1949**

During the following years ministry at the college grew, the rural congregation at Eau Plaine was served, and local pastors shared morning devotionals on the local public radio station WLBL. In 1949 while Orville Wold was pastor, the church changed its name from First English Lutheran back to Trinity Lutheran. During the pastoral call of Orvis Hanson, the cornerstone for the current building was laid in 1952 with the dedication of the newly constructed church in May of 1953.



**Orvis Hanson  
1949-1954**

The late 1950s and early 1960s were years of exceptional growth for Trinity under the pastoral care of Wendell Frerichs and Stanley Klyve. The congregation grew from 800 to 1200 members. In 1959 Trinity began having seminary interns assist the growing congregation. During the following few years interns Al Erickson, Fred Mastad, Don Nelson, Ted Greenfield, Paul Gilbertson, and Eldon Olson served Trinity. The use of annual interns ended in 1964. Besides needing interns to help out due to the church's amazing growth, Trinity purchased the Breitenstein Apartment building next door to the church for an education building in 1960 at a cost of \$12,500. The building was remodeled into Sunday school rooms, a library, with one apartment kept for use by the interns. A tunnel was constructed to join the building with the church. Then in 1966 an associate pastor, Eugene Anderson, was called to serve with senior pastor Vern Holtan. When Pastor Anderson left in 1967, Merton Fish was called to serve as associate pastor.



**Wendell Frerich  
1954-1956**



**Stanley Klyve  
1956-1962**



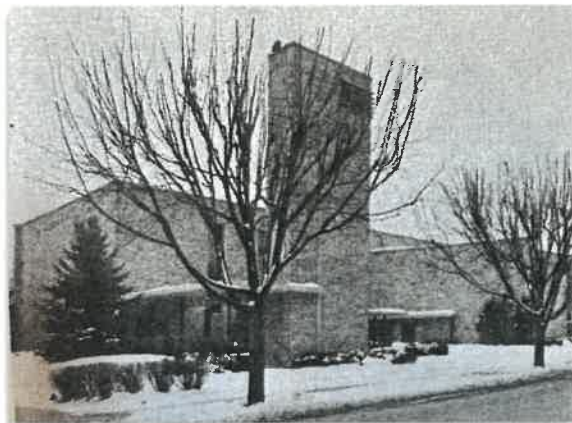
**Eugene Anderson  
1966-1967**



**Vern Holtan  
1962-1972**



**Merton Fish  
1967-1970**





**G. James Oliver  
1972-1980**

With continued growth, the church in 1969 purchased a property on Pine Street to expand the parking lot. The sanctuary was turned around in a major remodeling in 1970. Pastor G. James Oliver was called in 1970 to be associate pastor. He was called to be senior pastor in 1972, and in 1973 Daniel Litzer was called to be the associate pastor. In 1977 Trinity helped form a new congregation, Good Shepherd Lutheran in Plover. Nineteen Trinity families transferred to the new congregation. With the end of the war in Vietnam, Trinity sponsored two Vietnamese families in 1974—the Duong family and the Nguyen family.



**Daniel Litzer  
1973-1980**

In 1978 Trinity hired Mary Markwardt as the Christian Education Director. Also in 1978, Trinity Lutheran Church Foundation, Inc. was founded. Later this was combined with the Memorial and Special Gifts Committee, becoming the Endowment and Special Gifts Committee. Some of the endowed funds provide for scholarships for Trinity youth to Lutheran colleges and seminaries through the "Ottem Fund" and to public colleges and universities through the "Rasmussen Fund." Assets in this committee started at \$68,820 in 1978, grew to \$278,128 in 1998, and are currently at \$1,896,104.



**Ronald Pechauer  
1980-1985**

In 1980 and 1981 associate pastors Ronald Pechauer and John Rasmussen were called. A radio ministry was started in 1980. Retired pastor Gilbert Halvorson was hired to be a visitation pastor in 1984. Pastor Halvorson had grown up in Stevens Point and had belonged to Trinity at that time. He returned to his family home and church in retirement to continue serving. He also served the community as interim mayor for a short period of time.



**John Rasmussen  
1981-1985**



**Gil Halvorson  
1984-2000**



**Sanctuary prior to re-orientation**



In 1985 and 1986 Kenneth Knutson and David Maxfield were called as senior and associate pastor. Sandra Wendland joined the staff in 1986 as an Associate in Ministry. The church building underwent another remodeling and addition in 1986. The adjoining education building was removed at that time. The original building was enveloped for greater energy efficiency. Added were classrooms, a library and lounge area, offices, and an elevator. Three additional homes on the block were purchased and either torn down or moved to expand the parking lot. For additional income, Trinity rented a majority of their parking lot to Associated Bank for employee parking.



**Kenneth Knutson**  
Senior Pastor 1985-2003

When Trinity went through its remodeling in 1986, the church took out a line of credit at a local bank for the \$1,500,000 project. However, most of the construction ended up being funded by church members through a note program. The church paid a slightly higher interest rate to members than local banks on savings accounts but saved money by not paying higher bank loan fees. The last note was paid off in 1998, figuratively "burning the mortgage" just before Trinity celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1999.

With the continued growth of the congregation, Trinity's first youth director, Jim Ranney, was hired in 1994. Andrew "Mo" Moscinski was hired as Trinity's second youth director in 1996. The youth were consistently actively involved in local community service projects, attendance at national youth gatherings, and mission trips to Midwest cities.

The year 2000 was an eventful year for the congregation. Gil Halvorson retired as Trinity's visitation pastor. Another retired pastor member of the congregation, Roger McAbee, was hired to replace him. Longtime member Julie Summers, who had been supported in her seminary studies by the congregation's Ottem Fund, was ordained. The Stephen Ministry program began, and the church building went through another remodeling in the basement and in the sanctuary with the addition of stained glass windows.



**Sandra Wendland**  
Education Director 1986-2015

2003 was another exciting year in the life of the congregation. For the first time since 1964, Trinity had a seminary intern for a year. Michael Fazio was a welcome addition to the staff, especially since Pastor Knutson decided to retire in 2003. Pastor Maxfield had a co-terminus call and left Trinity at the same time. Trinity was staffed by intentional interim Pastor Ray Clausen, Pastor McAbee, Sandra Wendland, and youth director, Pam Gjersvig.



**David Maxfield**  
Associate Pastor 1986-2003



**Roger McAbee**  
Visitation Pastor 2000-2006



**Michael Fazio**  
Seminary Intern  
2003

After a period of self-study, the congregation called Don Gray to serve as senior pastor in November of 2005. Unfortunately, he stayed only a few months, resigning in 2006 due to family issues. Trinity was assigned another interim pastor, Alan Schaffmeyer. This all coincided with the resignation of visitation pastor Roger McAbee due to health issues and the hiring of Heidi Corcoran as music and worship leader and Todd Lewis as youth and family coordinator.



**Don Gray**  
Senior Pastor 2005

Pastor Steven Olson was called in 2007. During the same year, a plan was implemented for expanded and coordinated visitation and conducting of worship services at the numerous elder care facilities in the area besides the two nursing homes. The following year, Judy Fink was hired as parish nurse. To enhance worship, hand chimes were purchased in 2010 with funds from a bequest. The sanctuary was renovated in 2014. Pastor Olson and Sandra Wendland both retired in 2015, and Pastor Beth Macha became Trinity's interim pastor. The only other physical structure on the block, a lovely former home turned into office space, was purchased by Trinity in 2015. Trinity rents a large portion of the building while retaining joint use of a large conference room.



**Steve Olson, Senior Pastor**  
2007-2015

Besides the changes in staff in 2006, there were additional new mission and ministry additions affecting congregational life. A joint campus outreach program at UWSP was started with Redeemer Lutheran Church. A Mutual Ministry Team was created for improved staff and congregation working relationships. A prayer shawl ministry and a puppet ministry were started. Meals were provided at the local Salvation Army homeless shelter. All this occurred while the worship space was again refurbished.

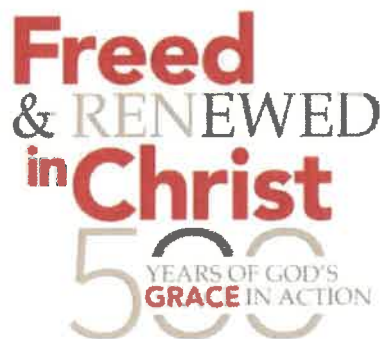
Late in 2016 Trinity extended a call to Pastor Clay Schmit who arrived early in 2017. Pastor Schmit is a gifted musician and preacher who enhanced an already strong worship experience at Trinity. In the fall of 2017 Trinity celebrated the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's Reformation with a community-wide multi-denominational event. In 2018 Amy Kurkowski was hired as director of the Trinity Learning Center & Preschool. Early 2020 saw the closing of almost everything across the nation, including churches, due to Covid-19. After experiencing remote worship for more than one year, the church was able to fully open in 2022 with a multi-denominational music event with guest music and hymn writer Marty Haugen. Also in 2022, the group Historic Stevens Point held a celebration of the former Trinity Church at Strongs and Brawley streets before it was demolished. It was a fitting acknowledgement of the building's past usage. Pastor Schmit retired late in 2022 with subsequent interims member pastor Ted Johanson and later Pastor Joyce Heintz serving the congregation.



**Clay Schmit, Senior Pastor**  
2017-2022



**Ted Johanson**  
Interim Pastor  
2022-2023



**Marty Haugen**

## Trinity Lutheran Church Women



Trinity Lutheran Church Women (TLCW) is a part of Churchwide Women's Organization of the ELCA (WELCA). In geographical divisions, we are also a part of the Women of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin and The Tomorrow River Conference Women. Members can participate in events organized by these larger groups as well as local events. The Churchwide purpose statement is, "As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, society, and the world." In addition to LWR quilts and kits and other projects, we offer monthly small group Bible studies called Circles. Currently we have two active Circles, Charity Circle meets in the evenings and Joy Circle meets in the afternoons. We welcome all Trinity women to join and participate in our projects.



## TRINITY'S STAINED GLASS WINDOWS



In the 25 years since Trinity Lutheran Church's 125th anniversary, many changes have occurred in the congregation's leadership and in its building. One significant and visually impressive feature we notice every time we enter the sanctuary is the addition of our beautiful stained glass windows.

The idea for purchasing and installing the nine windows came about due to a significant estate gift from Almyra and Evelyn Betlach. The two sisters were lifelong Trinity members who shared a love for our church and our community. Their gift was supplemented by memorial donations from Frank and Lillian Anderson and Gurdon and LuAnn Dickenson Hamilton, as well as donations in memory of Rick Johnson, Boletta Schleicher, John Schindler, Harold Knutson, and Gladys Stoner.

On January 8, 1998, the first meeting of the Stained Glass Window Task Force was held, with instructions to research, design, and assess the feasibility for the project of acquiring and installing stained glass windows in the sanctuary. Members of the committee were Conrad Favor (Chairperson), Diane Beversdorf, Cathy Carapezza, Steve Chizzo, Lois Hagen, Siu Lin Hom, Roberta Honl, Judy Knutson, Margaret Maxfield, and Sherlene Schmidt.

After a good deal of research into companies that could perform the necessary work needed for the project, Gaytee Stained Glass, Inc. of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was chosen, along with Don Dulak and Sons for masonry work and Lind Electric for electrical work.

In the spring of 1999, work began by Gaytee Stained Glass on the theme and design of the windows, following suggestions from the task force. Once the design of the windows was approved, the physical work of removing the old glass began in August, followed by the installation of the new glass in the fall of 1999. The total cost of the project was about \$72,000.

On May 21, 2000, a Service of Dedication of the Stained Glass Windows was held at Trinity with Pastors Kenneth Knutson and David Maxfield presiding.



## ICONOGRAPHY

Created specifically for Trinity Lutheran Church, these nine windows represent the triune life of God reflected both in nature and in the faith of the church.

The main theme on the south wall is the tree of life. The goal was to design a tree that was both recognizable yet symbolic. The tree is imaged as multi-colored with branches and numerous shades of green leaves. It has stylized features so as to capture a sense of the joyful, lyrical nature of faith. From the tree flows streams of water that spread across the bottom of all the windows and around to the north wall. These streams represent baptismal and life-giving waters. This tree of life is also a symbol of the life giving cross of Christ; thus, it is a symbol of God the Son. It is as though this cross of life reaches around the congregation as if to embrace them. A pastel rainbow spans across all five windows. It represents the rainbow of God's promise and serves as a visual bridge connecting all five windows together into one panoramic image. Present in the design for the south wall are seven stars. The number seven in Holy Scripture is symbolic of perfection/completion. These stars are symbolic of all that is right and whole.

As if to flow from the south wall, the north wall completes the Trinitarian theme by imaging God the Father (Sun, source of life) and God the Holy Spirit (Dove, peace giver). These symbols for God are set in the context of a continuation of the baptismal waters and tree of life found on the south wall. Present in the windows of this wall are five stars, symbolic of humanity (head and four limbs) and the five wounds of Christ. Moreover, these five stars, combined with the seven of the south wall, add up to twelve, the number found so often in the book of Revelation and symbolic of the New Jerusalem, the New Eden.

In summary, all nine windows are designed to create a continuous Trinitarian image of baptism, new life, and the hope of the glory we await in the Kingdom of God.

## MUSIC AT TRINITY



**Heidi Corcoran**  
Coordinator  
Worship and Arts



**Kelly Nielsen - Conductor**  
Choir and Praise Band



**Chris Eaton**  
Choir Accompanist



**Christian Stromley**  
Pianist/Organist  
Bell Choir Director

The Trinity musical ministry has been a significant part of our worship experience. The Church Choir, Bell Choir, and Praise Band have given the singers, the bell ringers as well as the instrumentalists much pleasure and they, in turn, hope they give the congregation continuing joy and inspiration.

Several changes took place, including an organ rebuild, the new experience of making remote individual recordings during the Covid pandemic, as well as changes of leadership by various talented musicians who have guided us through some difficult circumstances.

***Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!*** Psalm 98:4

### THOSE WHO HAVE LED US . . .

**Barbara Towey:** 1975-2017 (43 years) She served as Organist, Senior Choir Director, Young Believers Choir, Cherub Choir at various times.

**Anita Wray:** Organist 1969-1999 (31 years)

**Lois Hagen:** Carol Choir Director 1969-1989 (21 years) Young Believers Choir 1985-1987 (3 years)

**Diana Strommen:** Youth Choir Director 1990-2000 (11 years)  
Senior Choir Director 1997-2000 (4 years)

**Richard Benson:** Organist 1999-2013 (15 years)

**Edye Ray:** Cherub Choir Director 2000-2006 (7 years)

**Katie Wroblewski:** Organist/Hand Bells Director 2005- 2022 (18 years)

**Darcy Johnson:** Pianist, Praise Team various years to present

**Matt Buchman:** Senior Choir & Praise Team Director 2018-2021 (4 years)

**Heidi Corcoran:** Cherub Choir Director 2007-2009 and Senior Choir Director 2016-2017 (2 years) Music Coordinator (5 years)



## Trinity's Christian Education and Youth Ministry

Since its founding in 1874, Trinity has placed a high priority on the faith formation of its youth. Sunday school and Confirmation classes have been at the heart of faith development as the church has sought to follow the promise of Proverbs 22:6, "Start children off on the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not turn from it."

In the early years, the spiritual growth of the youth was generally provided by the head pastor, who taught Luther's Catechism to prepare grade school youth for the rite of Confirmation at the end of eighth grade. Sunday school lessons were provided for all ages by volunteers.

As time passed and the church grew, the head pastor was assisted in youth education by seminary interns. In 1966, Trinity called Associate Pastors instead of interns to share in preaching and teaching. Christian Education Director Mary Markwardt was hired in 1978. She was followed by Associate in Ministry Sandra Wendland in 1986. In 1994 Trinity hired its first full-time youth director, Jim Ranney, who assisted the pastors and Sandra with confirmation as well as planning and leading various youth activities. Jim was followed by other youth directors, Andrew "Mo" Moscinski, Aaron DiBenedetto, and Pam Gjersvig. Trinity's current Youth and Family Coordinator, Todd Lewis, arrived in 2006.



Over the years, Trinity's ministry to its youth has expanded beyond the basics of Sunday school and Confirmation instruction. Other faith nurturing programs have included Vacation Bible School, Confirmation camp at Imago Dei in Clintonville, and ELCA National Youth Gatherings every three years in cities such as New Orleans, Atlanta, and Houston.

There have also been short-term summer mission trips and service projects to inner city areas of Milwaukee and Minneapolis. Youth have also helped make bowls for the Empty Bowls program that helps the hungry in Portage County as well as ring bells for the Salvation Army's local homeless shelter. Fun events such as Christian entertainers, contemporary singers, and youth dinners have fostered fellowship.



Even though the church as a whole is experiencing challenges and changes, Trinity is prepared to meet those challenges in traditional as well as new ways of learning as we continue to work with our youth on their faith journeys.



## TRINITY AND COVID-19

The Trinity sanctuary was packed for the Ash Wednesday service in 2020. Then, barely a week later, in-person worship ceased due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thankfully, worship could continue by recording on a cell phone in the church building and congregational members' home computers, cell phones, or iPads connected to Facebook or YouTube. In-home weekly worship continued for a little over a year. Choir members recorded their own voice at home, sent the recordings to the choir director, Matt Buchman, who then combined the individual voices into an anthem while projecting everyone's pictures on the screen. When weather permitted, Sunday services were held in the parking lot with worshippers either sitting in distanced folding chairs or in their cars.

Once the congregation could return to worship within the church building, social distancing and mask wearing were necessary for a short period of time. Other changes were also necessary. For instance, Pastor Clay Schmit announced the introduction of individual kits with bread and wine so everyone could safely partake in Communion. Food-based events, such as the Thanksgiving pie social and funeral luncheons, went on hiatus until 2023.

Now, in 2024, the pandemic is officially declared over, but its impact is still felt in various ways. Members died. Traditions and milestones were missed or upset. Some members prefer to watch the Sunday service from their homes still instead of returning to in-person worship and fellowship. Things simply have changed.

It is a time of flux for the congregation at the time of this writing, but this was not the first global pandemic. In 1918 the Great Influenza swept across the world, and the Trinity congregation survived that pandemic, too. A great deal has changed since then, but the church is still here. That is something else to celebrate as we consider our place, our needs, and what our next 150 years may bring.



## TRINITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology makes up an important part of Trinity's ministry, especially in recent years. Starting in 1980, a radio ministry began through a local station as an outreach measure but also as a service for those Trinity members who could not attend church. In 1990, using a camcorder, broadcasting on Stevens Point's Community Access channel began.



In 1999, the church office had a dial-up Internet connection. Only three users could be on the Internet at a time. Since then, there have been many computer upgrades including an online Trinity library, interactive website, online giving, and Wednesday large group emails with congregational updates. Technological capabilities expanded in 2015–2016 when the sanctuary was remodeled. During the remodeling, worship took place in Fellowship Hall.

As part of the renovation, pews were removed from the center of the church to accommodate wheelchairs or people who needed more space. Flexible chair seating was added in the front. Pews were also removed from one side of the rear of the sanctuary. Members then used those pews to create a sound booth. Three stationary cameras were installed along with a large screen at the front of the sanctuary.

When in-person worship was temporarily halted due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, services were initially recorded with an iPhone. It later became necessary to update to hi-definition in order to stream. To accommodate the new equipment, the sound booth was lengthened. With its link to the past in its construction material as well as the number of changes since the church's founding, this corner of the sanctuary serves as a physical reminder of the congregation's capacity for change and willingness to embrace the future.



## MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Thursday morning Men's Bible Study has been meeting for at least 30 years. It started as a small group of 4-6 men, but has consistently grown and is now a group of 12-16. In the beginning, they met at 6:30 am before most of them went to work, but now prefer to meet at 8 am. This is a welcoming group of men who love God, love others and like to talk about the Bible while they eat donuts and drink coffee. Over the years, the group has studied whole books of the Bible and all of the passages in the Lutheran Lectionary. They have also had some guest speakers, and they watched a few seasons of the series "The Chosen."



## LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF PROJECTS AT TRINITY

World War II left 20% of the world's Lutherans homeless in 1945. Here in the United States, Lutheran churches in at least 20 states mobilized to help in Europe through a new agency called Lutheran World Relief (LWR). Over the years following World War II, LWR became an international aid and development organization that partners with communities to help people who are living in poverty or experiencing emergency situations.

One of the flagship programs, which was started in 1945 and continues today, is its Quilt and Kit Ministry. Each year Lutherans across the country assemble and donate LWR Mission Quilts as well as several kinds of care kits, such as layettes, to assist people in need around the world. Much has changed in the 75 years since the end of WW II, but in thousands of congregations, American Lutherans support of the work of Lutheran World Relief. In 2016, \$14 million worth of quilts and kits went to more than 576,000 people in 21 countries. The quilting project at Trinity began in 1968. Ellen Brikowski was instrumental in starting the program, and 25 quilts were made that first year. Our biggest quilting years were 2018 and 2019 with 423 quilts completed each year.

Trinity started making layettes in 1969 with 17 completed. The biggest year since was 1977 when we made 388 baby care kits. Since 1968, the women of Trinity have made 11,651 quilts and 8,472 layettes. Besides quilts and layettes, our members have also made Personal Care Kits (144 in 2023) and School Kits (252) that are distributed by LWR around the world.



## Trinity Learning Center & Preschool

Trinity Daycare was started in 1987 as a mission of the church with its main purpose being to support the Stevens Point community's need for quality childcare. Trinity Daycare started with fewer than 10 employees, and the children enrolled were 2 years old through school-age. The daycare was started in the upstairs classrooms, where children went from room to room with each room providing different learning experiences, such as art, science, math, reading, and large motor activities.

In 2001, Trinity Daycare expanded so that families could enroll infants and toddlers. This allowed families to have all their children in one building that provided a loving and nurturing safe environment.

Trinity Daycare experienced one of its biggest changes in 2007 with its collaboration with the Stevens Point School District to create the 4K program. This program was designed to be a community-based and play-based learning program. Children in 4K follow a learning curriculum through the district that focuses on Cognitive, Social and Emotional, Language, and Health and Physical activities.

In 2009, Trinity Daycare changed its name to Trinity Learning Center & Preschool. This was done to indicate to the community that we are a program that emphasizes providing an environment that meets all of the children's developmental goals within a safe and fun-loving environment.

In 2021 and 2022, through families and the community fundraising together, we were able to upgrade our playground with new climbers for both the infants and toddlers and preschool children. A safe poured in playground surface under the new preschool climber was installed. We also installed turf in the infant and toddler playgrounds that was previously used at Goerke Field. This was a great way to work with our community, the Building and Grounds Committee, Trinity Learning Center & Preschool families, and many other volunteers to provide a safe play space for our youngest learners.

Trinity Learning Center & Preschool currently has 30 dedicated staff and is rated 4 stars by Young Star, Wisconsin's Childcare Quality and Improvement System. We are open Monday-Friday from 6:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. In early 2024 we have 70 children enrolled in our program and our capacity is 74 children.



**Amy Kurkowski, TLC&P  
Director**



**Doris Way**  
Administrative Assistant – Doris is married and has two beautiful children. She is originally from Honduras, where she met her husband while he was on a mission trip. Her favorite thing to do is spending time with her family. She feels blessed to serve the people of Trinity in the office. One of her favorite Bible passages is John: 13:34-35 *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*



**Tammy Koch**  
Financial Assistant – Tammy is from Wisconsin Rapids and has two diplomas from Mid-State Technical College in Wisconsin Rapids and came with 18 plus year's experience working in an ELCA Congregation. She loves going to concerts, camping, geocaching, snowmobiling, reading, and scrapbooking. Much of her time away from work is spent with her husband, son and the family hamster.

## Our Office & Building Staff



**Glen P. Bauer**  
Building and Grounds Director – Glen has an associate degree in Fire Science from College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, Illinois. He also has forty years of varied maintenance experience. When Glen is not at Trinity sharing his extensive maintenance knowledge, he enjoys helping others with home maintenance and repair, volunteering at the Portage County Humane Society, helping at his church (Good Shepherd Lutheran, Plover), reading, and spending time with his two cats and dog.



Todd Lewis,  
Youth and Family Coordinator

I still remember the first time I walked through the doors of Trinity when I interviewed for the youth and family position here. That day, I knew only a snapshot of this congregation's ministries, its history and its presence in the Stevens Point community. In the years since, through highs and lows, joys and change, and all the experiences we have shared, I have discovered a clearer, more vibrant picture of a very special place and even more so of its people.

I am honored every day to be a part of this family of faith, which took root 150 years ago. This year, as we celebrate those beginnings and how far the faith of those earliest members has brought us, we also look toward the future. The branches of Trinity's ministry have seen many seasons, providing shelter and hope and a life-giving presence to God's people in immeasurable ways. Together, as we live and grow as Christ's church in all that is to come, may we be open to spreading those branches even wider in ways we have yet to imagine. I pray God's love will continue to grow in us and guide us as a place and a people as we share the news of that never-ending love today and always!



## TRINITY SERVES THROUGH . . .

- One Big Tent
- Laundry Love
- Holiday Baskets
- Salvation Army Hope Center
- Operation Bootstrap
- Homme Home
- Bethany Home
- ELCA World Hunger
- Lutheran World Relief
- Diaper Drive
- Crossways Bible Camp
- Stevens Point Warming Shelter
- Empty Bowls
- Transact Hope
- Hat and Mitten Tree
- Project Fresh Start
- Mobile Pantry

- Portage County Crisis Center
- Nursing Home Services
- Assisted Living Services
- Disaster and Domestic Relief
- Prayer Shawls
- Afghans for Graduates
- Little Free Pantry
- Little Free Library
- Operation Christmas Child
- Stephen Ministry



### CHURCH COUNCIL

- Edye Ray, President
- Tina Peters, Past President
- Randy Olson, Vice President
- Olivia Santangelo, Secretary
- Kathy Trachte, Treasurer and Finance
- Russ Prusack, Building & Grounds
- DeeAnn Donahue, Christian Education
- Nancy Wenger, Christian Life & Growth
- Jim Wiegand, Communication
- David Blado, Global/Local Outreach
- Randy Olson, Personnel
- Andria Bena, Stewardship
- Sue Acaley, TLC&P
- Roberta Holthusen, Worship
- Anne Verhagen, Youth & Family

### TRINITY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY TASK FORCE

- Donna Watson
- Su Melby
- Lois Hagen
- Roberta Holthusen
- Diane Beversdorf
- Bill Beversdorf
- Nancy Wenger
- John Wenger
- Fred Krause
- Olivia Santangelo
- Jessica Hoerter
- Tom Johnson

And a big THANK YOU to countless others who have helped to make this celebration possible!

TRINITY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY



UNITED IN

CHRIST,

IGNITED BY THE SPIRIT,

EXCITED TO SERVE!

EXCITED TO SERVE!